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Book Notices.

A Commentary on The Revelation.

The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges. The Revelation of St. John the Divine: With Notes and Introduction. By the late Rev. William Henry Simcox. New York: MacMillan and Co. Pp. LX., 174. Price 75 cts.

At last we have a commentary on Revelation reasonable in matter and price, fresh, broad, scholarly, free from crotchets, and positive without narrowness, dogmatism or vituperation. The regret, already expressed by many, is intensified by the appearance of this book that the biblical world has so early lost by death the presence and work of this competent scholar. Sixty pages of Introduction furnish a very complete presentation of the general problems of the book. Chapter I. on the Authorship and Canonicity of the Revelation, maintains the canonicity and, after a careful examination of the arguments against the authorship by John the apostle, rejects all but that from style and allows that even this may be set aside if sufficient time can be shown to intervene between the composition of the Revelation and that of the Gospel. In Chapter II. therefore, he takes up the question of date and place of composition. The latter is recognized to be Patmos. After a thorough résumé of the tradition as to the date and a study of the internal evidence, the evidence of Irenæus in favor of the late date is set aside and the conclusion is that "the most probable view seems to be, that the Revelation was written by the Apostle John, at some time between the death of Nero in June A. D. 68, and the capture of Jerusalem in August A. D. 70." Principles of Interpretation occupy Chapter III. This chapter is not so clear as it might have been made but the general position of the writer is that there is truth but not the whole truth in each of the great systems of interpretation the "præterist," the "futurist" and the "continuous historical" or "resumptive." The book must have been more or less intelligible to its first readers; yet its pictures and visions have no complete and adequate counterpart in the history of those times—but await a complete fulfilment; and that fulfilment is to be preceded by certain events which occur in the history of the world and occur repeatedly. But the "continuous historical" scheme is regarded as a failure in its attempt to make out its detailed scheme, and the identification of Antichrist with the Papacy is emphatically denied from the testimony of both Scripture and history. Chapter IV. completes the Introduction with an Analysis.

The main body of the commentary follows, succeeded by an Appendix of thirty pages embodying three *excursus*. The first considers the question whether the "angels of the churches" are bishops or guardian angels, and leans to the latter view. The significance of the angelic element and of the four living creatures is also discussed. The second is concerned with the Heresies controverted in the Revelation and finds in the absence of references to the doctrines opposed in the Gospel evidence for an early date. The third "excursus" is by far the most important as well as the longest, being an elab-

orate examination of Vischer's recent theory of the Composition of the Apocalypse so highly commended by Professor Harnack. Mr. Simcox while recognizing the plausibility of the theory and the difficulties which it succeeds in explaining, cannot find sufficient evidence in its favor to warrant its acceptance. In the commentary Mr. Simcox seems to want to be impartial and desirous simply to get at the sense of the passage under consideration without regard to theological presuppositions. Thus he maintains the literal interpretation of the millenium passage, regarding any other view as exposed to insuperable exegetical difficulties and adding, "if the true sense be *not* the literal one, it is safest to regard it as being as yet undiscovered." The "woman" of chapter 12 is the Jewish church. The beast "the eighth and is of the seven," is Domitian.

There is much to commend in this book. There are some things also which are defective. We have already noticed a want of clearness in the discussion and the same appears in the interpretations. Various views are suggested but no definite grounds are given for decision and the student is left in uncertainty not merely as to the writer's view but as to the facts in the case. The other chief defect is a failure to give due weight to the symbolic character of the book, and to recognize a unity, whether original or artificial, in the course of thought. Perhaps, however, the reader and student may be thankful to meet with a commentator on the Revelation who is *not* provided with a ready-made scheme of interpretation, *not* cock-sure of every hard passage, *not* so desirous of making a clear and strong impression as of getting at the truth, and willing to be uncertain where the light is dim.

Historical Criticism and the Gospels.

Gospel-Criticism and Historical Christianity: a Study of the Gospels and of the History of the Gospel-Canon during the Second Century, with a consideration of the results of Modern Criticism. By Orello Cone, D. D. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. Pp. 365. Price \$1.75.

This book is addressed "to the believers who fear criticism and to the unbelievers who appeal to it," and the endeavor is to persuade both parties to see that the extremes at which they stand are equally wrong. True criticism, criticism in its final and settled issues, is a defender of the essentially historical character of Christianity. However readers may agree with the positive statements of the author upon disputed questions, they may be duly grateful for this conspectus of the course of investigation into the canon, genuineness and authenticity of the Gospels. It is difficult to avoid expressions of individual opinion when one is dealing with such themes and also to be willing to confine oneself rigorously within the bounds of one's chosen field of discussion, but the writer has emphasized rather too vigorously his radical views and permitted himself to range through the realm of exegetical and dogmatic theology. He admits possible Johannine material in the Fourth Gospel but denies its authorship to the apostle John. It is concluded that there are statements attributed to Jesus in the Gospels which it is impossible that he ever uttered, especially all the material about the second coming which is the product of the Jewish consciousness of the time. The hermeneutical method of the evangelists is impliedly beneath contempt. On the whole the Gospels are "unique productions of love and legend," in general not unhistorical and yet not history, containing legends, discrepancies, contradictions, "unhistorical elements of various kinds." These are the main positions of the book on critical questions.